

## Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 AID-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 IGA-01 L-02 EB-07 COME-00

TRSE-00 OMB-01 MC-02 /057 W  
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R 311525Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9581

INFO DOD

JCS

HQ USSOUTHCOM, QUARRY HEIGHTS, CZ /J-5/

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEGUCIGALPA 1167

STATE FOR AID

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS

SUBJECT: CHIEF OF MISSION SUMMARY STATEMENT

REF: STATE 015489, PARA 3A(2)

1. OUR RELATIONS WITH THE HONDURAN MILITARY WILL CONTINUE TO BE VERY IMPORTANT BECAUSE OF THE CENTRAL ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN DIRECTING THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS POLICIES. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE MILITARY INTEND TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN DETERMINING THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIETY. GENERAL LOPEZ RETAINS HIS LEADERSHIP OF THE MILITARY, BUT HE SHARES HIS POWER WITH THE UPPER LEVEL MILITARY COLLEAGUES. LOPEZ HAS SUCCEEDED IN DAMPENING DISSATISFACTION WITHIN THE MILITARY WHICH SURFACED IN LATE 1974 BY PERSONALLY MAKING AN EFFORT TO REASSURE HIS SUPPORTERS AND THROUGH ADROIT SHIFTS WITHIN THE MILITARY AND THE GOVERNMENT THAT STRENGTHEN HIS POSITION AND UNDERCUT THE COMPLAINTS OF THE DISSIDENTS.

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2. RECENT ADJUSTMENTS IN ORGANIZATION AND STAFFING

OF FUERZAS ARMADAS DE HONDURAS (FAH) HAVE PROVIDED ENCOURAGING INDICATIONS THAT THE HONDURAN MILITARY ARE MAKING MARKED PROGRESS TOWARD A LEVEL OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND PROFESSIONALISM WHICH HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED THROUGH OUR VARIOUS SECURITY ASSISTANCE EFFORTS OVER THE YEARS. CONFIRMATION OF COLONEL CECILIO CASTRO BARRIENTOS AS CHIEF OF STAFF FAH ON FEBRUARY 1, 1975 WAS FOLLOWED BY THE DESIGNATION OF A NEW GENERAL STAFF AND THE APPOINTMENT OF NEW BATTALION AND BRIGADE COMMANDERS IN THE ARMY. THE MAJORITY OF ARMY PERSONNEL CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE AND THE NEW STAFF AND COMMAND DESIGNEES ARE NOW BEGINNING TO SETTLE INTO THEIR JOBS.

3. THE TWO MOST SIGNIFICANT IMPRESSIONS OF OVERALL CHANGE ARE: FIRST, THE NEW BATTALION COMMANDERS -- WHO WIELD CONSIDERABLE AUTHORITY THROUGH DIRECT CONTROL OF TROOP ELEMENTS -- ARE BOTH MORE INDEPENDENT OF THE FAVORS OF GENERAL LOPEZ AND PROFESSIONALLY BETTER GROUNDED THAN THEIR PREDECESSORS. SECOND, COLONEL CASTRO AND HIS STAFF ARE TAKING A MORE DYNAMIC APPROACH TO THE LONG-RANGE MODERNIZATION OF HONDURAN ARMED FORCES.

4. THE HONDURAN AIR FORCE REMAINS ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED IN STAFF AND ORGANIZATION. THE DELIVERY OF SIX A-37 AIRCRAFT IN THE MAY - SEPTEMBER 1975 TIME FRAME WILL MARKEDLY ENHANCE AIR FORCE CAPABILITY. ADDITIONALLY, THE DELIVERY OF TEN F-86E AIRCRAFT PURCHASED FROM YUGOSLAVIA THROUGH A U.S. COMMERCIAL AGENT IS EXPECTED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

5. IN KEEPING WITH THE CHARGE TO HARMONIZE THE SUBSTANCE OF THE POM INPUT WITH THE HC PLANNING EFFORT, THE MILGP HAS DISCUSSED WITH COLONEL CASTRO A SAMPLE FIVE-YEAR PLANNING GUIDE TO PROVIDE COMBAT FORCES marginally sufficient for prudent, cost-effective national defense against external or internal threats. THIS STRAW-MAN PROGRAM IS BASED ON FIELDING A MODERNIZED, DEFENSIVELY ORIENTED FORCE

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OF SIX INFANTRY BATTALIONS, TWO 105-MM HOWITZER BATTALIONS, ONE ENGINEER CONSTRUCTION BATTALION, AN ADEQUATE COAST GUARD CAPABILITY, A FOUR PLANE AUGMENTATION TO THE A-37 PROGRAM NOW UNDERWAY, AND THE NECESSARY SUPPORT FOR THE FOREGOING -- ALL BY THE END OF CALENDAR YEAR 1980. THIS SAMPLE PROGRAM HAS ELICITED A STRONG INTEREST FROM COLONEL CASTRO -- AS MUCH ON THE BASIS OF ITS LOGICAL APPROACH TO

LONG RANGE STAFF PLANNING AS ON THE SPECIFIC DETAILS THEREIN. AN INDEPENDENTLY DEVELOPED MODERNIZATION PROGRAM -- ON A MUCH GRANDER, BUT LESS REALISTIC, SCALE -- WAS TO BE EXPECTED FROM A NEW GENERAL STAFF. TO HAVE A RATIONAL, REALISTICALLY ATTAINABLE, DEFENSIVELY ORIENTED STRAW-MAN PLAN IN AUTHORITATIVE HONDURAN HANDS BEFORE AN INDEPENDENTLY DEVELOPED PROGRAM HAS SURFACED APPEARS, HOPEFULLY, TO STEAL A MARCH ON MORE GRANDIOISE SCHEMES.

6. THE FAH WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR MORE MODERN MATERIAL FROM DOD, US COMMERCIAL, OR THIRD-COUNTRY SOURCES -- THOUGH, AT THIS TIME, THE PREFERENCE REMAINS STRONGLY FOCUSED ON US SOURCES FOR MAJOR ITEMS, SPARES, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. CASH, FMS CREDIT, OR MAP REQUESTS FOR THE FOLLOWING EQUIPMENT CAN PROBABLY BE EXPECTED SHORTLY: VEHICLES, COMMUNICATIONS ITEMS, 105-MM HOWITZERS, 106-MM RECOILESS RIFLES, 90-MM RECOILESS RIFLES AND 4.2 MORTARS.

7. I RECOGNIZE THAT COST AND AVAILABILITY OF MAJOR ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT MUST BE ADDRESSED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. HOWEVER, I TRUST THAT REASONABLE FAH EQUIPMENT REQUESTS WILL NOT HAVE TO BE REDIRECTED TO THIRD-COUNTRY SOURCES BECAUSE OF UNRESPONSIVE USG REACTION THERETO.

8. THERE ARE NO DIRECT LINKS BETWEEN US SECURITY ASSISTANCE AND OTHER US ECONOMIC AID TO HONDURAS. THE THRUST OF THE AID PROGRAM IS AIMED AT ASSISTANCE TO THE RURAL POOR.

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INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 AID-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 IGA-01 L-02 EB-07 COME-00

TRSE-00 OMB-01 MC-02 /057 W

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R 311525Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9582  
INFO DOD  
JCS  
HQ USSOUTHCOM, QUARRY HEIGHTS, CZ /J-5/

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEGUCIGALPA 1167

STATE FOR AID

9. IT SHOULD BE POINTED OUT THAT EACH NEW "GENERATION" OF OFFICERS IS BETTER TRAINED AND EDUCATED THAN ITS PREDECESSOR, AND THEREFORE MORE CONSCIOUS OF ITS POTENTIAL ROLE IN THE COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT. OUR PROPOSED COURSES OF ACTION ARE DIRECTED AT REINFORCING THE U.S. POSITION AS THE MOST IMPORTANT FOREIGN INFLUENCE ON THE HONDURAN MILITARY. GIVEN THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY THIS INFLUENCE SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN THE ACTIONS OF THE HONDURAN GOVERNMENT BOTH IN DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MATTERS AND WILL CONTRIBUTE TO MAINTAINING HONDURAS' TRADITIONALLY FRIENDLY ORIENTATION TOWARD THE UNITED STATES.

10. A STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE POLICY OF "EVEN-HANDEDNESS" VIS-A-VIS EL SALVADOR IN REGARD TO THE SUPPLY OF MILITARY TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT, AS DEFINED IN THE DECISION MEMORANDUM #11 OF THE FY 1974-75 CASP, OFFERS THE MOST FEASIBLE POLICY FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE OF MEETING HONDURAN MILITARY REQUESTS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME NOT EXACERBATING HONDURAN-SALVADORAN TENSIONS.  
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11. THE PROJECTED SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EASES THE DETERIORATING EQUIPMENT SITUATION, PROVIDES FOR THE HIGHEST PRIORITY DEFENSE NEEDS OF THE COUNTRY, AND REDUCES THE LIKELIHOOD THAT HONDURAS WILL TURN TO THIRD-COUNTRIES TO RESOLVE ITS DEFENSE PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, THE PROGRAMMED TRAINING ASSISTANCE FUNDING IS CONSIDERED LOW. A MODEST FUNDING INCREASE COULD CONSIDERABLY ENHANCE U.S. INTERESTS BOTH IN INCREASING HONDURAN MILITARY PROFESSIONALISM AND IN MAINTAINING U.S. INFLUENCE.  
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